Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-01 CU-02 NEAE-00 OPR-01 SAM-01

IO-10 SCS-03 USSS-00 SY-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6311
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PBOR, IS, JO

SUBJECT: ARAB STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AND BOMBS IN WEST BANK AND EAST JERUSALEM

REF: JERUSALEM 2003

1. ARAB STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN SUPPORT OF PLO CONTINUED TODAY (NOV 18) AS EAST JERUSALEM STUDENTS FROM ST. GEORGE AND IBRAHIMIYYE SECONDARY SCHOOLS TOOK TO SALAH IDDIIN STREET FOR THE FIRST TIME CHANTING "PLO". THEY DISPERSED PRIOR TO THE ARRIVAL OF POLICE AND SOLDIERS. STUDENTS TEMPORARILY BLOCKED SIDESTREET ENTRANCE OF SCHOOL WITH LARGE STONES WHICH WERE REMOVED BY POLICE. FOR SEVERAL HOURS INTO THE MORNING MOUNTED POLICE AND BORDER POLICE JEEPS CONTINUED TO PATROL EAST JERUSALEM. AT NOON POLICE FIRED WATER CANNON INTO CROWD OF DEMNSTRATORS BLOCKING HEROD'S GATE OF OLD CITY.

DEMONSTRATORS WERE DISPERSED AS SHOPS AND SCHOOLS CLOSED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR THE DAY. STUDENTS ALSO WENT INTO THE STREETS IN BETHLEHEM

(SELDOM THE SCENE OF TROUBLE). UNIVERSITY OF BETHLEHEM STUDENT WAS HOSPITALIZED.

- 2. THIS LATEST SERIES OF STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, SECOND SINCE ARAFAT'S UN SPEECH, ERUPTED ON NOV 16 IN HEBRON, HALHOUL, RAMALLAH AND JENIN WHERE VIOLENT CLASHES TOOK PLACE BETWEEN ARAB STUDENTS AND GOI SECURITY POLICE AND SOLDIERS. SEVENTEEN YEAR OLD ARAB SCHOOL GIRL WAS REPORTEDLY KILLED IN THE JENIN DEMONSTRATION AS CLUB-WIELDING SECURITY FORCES AND ROCK-THROWING STUDENTS CLASHED WITH WHAT JERUSALEM POST ALLEGES WERE PROBABLY MOST VIOLENT STREET DEMONSTRATIONS BY WEST BANK RESIDENTS SINCE 1967. HEBRON WAS PLACED UNDER CURFEW FOLLOWING INCIDENTS IN WHICH STUDENTS REPORTEDLY BLOCKED ROADS, STONED ARMY VEHICLES AND SET CARS AFIRE. KOSHER ISRAELI RESTAURANT ESTABLISHED IN FRONT OF HEBRON MOSQUE WAS ALSO SET ABLAZE. NABLUS, WHICH HAD BEEN SCENE OF FIRST VIOLENT CLASHES BETWEEN GOI POLICE AND TROOPS NOV 13 (REFTEL) WAS QUIET. ON NOV 17 STUDENTS FROM HEBRON, HALHOUL, RAMALLAH AND JENIN, REPORTEDLY JOINED BY SOME SHOPKEEPERS, AGAIN TOOK TO THE STREETS TO EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR PLO AND OPPOSITION TO CONTINUED ISRAELI MILITARY OCCUPATION. NO VIOLENCE WAS REPORTED DURING THESE DEMONSTRA-TIONS.
- 3. ISRAELI HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS IN EAST JERUSALEM BECAME TARGETS OF TERRORISTS' BOMBS ON SAME DAY AS NOV 17 STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS. EXPLOSIVE CHARGES SLIGHTLY DAMAGED AN APARTMENT BUILDING IN RAMAT ESHKOL. ANOTHER EXPLOSION WHICH REPORTEDLY CAUSED NO DAMAGE TOOK PLACE IN FRONT OF A NEW SUPER MARKET THERE. THIRD AND POTENTIALLYSERIOUS EXPLOSIVE WAS FOILED IN FRENCH HILL APARTMENT BY DISCOVERY OF BOMB BEFORE IT DETONATED. THERE WERE NO INJURIES IN ANY OF EXPLOSIONS.
- 4. COMMENT: THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT AND OBVIOUS CONTRAST
 BETWEEN THESE DEMONSTRATIONS AND THOSE OF 1967-68. THE EARLIER
 ONES REFLECTED ANGER AND FRUSTRATION AT BEING SADDLED WITH
 THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION. WEST BANKERS WANTED TO CALL ATTENTION
 TO THEIR CONDITION BUT WITHOUT MUCH HOPE OF ITS BEING RELIEVED.
 TODAY'S DEMONSTRATIONS SPRING FROM A SENSE THAT EVENTS ARE
 MOVING THEIR WAY. WEST BANKERS ARE DEMONSTRATING FOR SOMETHING,
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AND IN THE HOPE OF ULTIMATELY GETTING WHAT THEY WANT, NOT MERELY LASHING OUT AGAINST THE ISRAELIS. WHILE THE COURSE OF THESE THINGS IS ALWAYS HARD TO PREDICT, THIS CHANGED CONTEXT MAY MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE GOI TO PREVENT SPORADIC OUTBREAKS OF THIS KIND REGARDLESS OF THE STERN MEASURES THEY ARE TAKING.

5. WE ASSUME THE DEMONSTRATIONS ARE BEING INSTIGATED BY PROPLO ELEMENTS, PROBABLY THE PALESTINE NATIONAL FRONT. SO FAR

THEIR MAIN SUCCESS HAS BEEN WITH STUDENTS, WHO HAVE LESS TO
LOSE THAN THE SHOPKEEPERS. FOR SOME REASON THE ARAB WOMEN,
TRADITIONALLY IN THE FOREFRONT OF WEST BANK DEMONSTRATIONS, HAVE
BEEN SITTING THIS ONE OUT.
DAY

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